



ASH WEDNESDAY

March 2, 2022

6:45 p.m.

The Prelude

Maureen Howell

Ash Wednesday begins the Christian season of Lent. We will spend the coming days journeying with Jesus toward the cross; toward the death that ultimately brings resurrection life. Many of us will spend these coming days practicing a new spiritual discipline or giving up something that seems to be getting in the way of the life we long to live. And tonight, we come together to mark the beginning of this Lenten journey.

We come together to acknowledge our sin, to acknowledge our mortality. We come to glimpse the Christ who offers forgiveness, who offers everlasting life.

As part of tonight's worship, the imposition of ashes will be offered. This practice may not be familiar to everyone. Ashes have been used in Christian churches to mark the beginning of Lent since at least the 10th Century, and ashes are mentioned in scripture as a symbol of purification and repentance. We offer the imposition of ashes tonight as a physical reminder of our mortality and sin; an assurance of God's forgiveness and salvation.

The Call to Worship (responsive) Joel 2:1, 12-14

Michael Hood

LEADER: Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

PEOPLE: **Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—**

LEADER: Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

PEOPLE: **Rend your hearts and not your garments.**

LEADER: Return to the Lord, your God, for God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing.

PEOPLE: **Who knows whether God will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind, a cereal offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?**

The Invocation

1. Lord, who through-out these for - ty days for us did fast and pray,
 2. As you with Sa - tan did con-tend, and did the vic - tory win,
 3. As you did hun - ger and did thirst, so teach us, gra - cious Lord,
 4. And thro' these days of pen - i - tence, and thro' your Pas - sion-tide,
 5. A - bide with us, that through this life of doubts and hope and pain,

teach us with you to mourn our sins and close by you to stay.
 O give us strength in you to fight, in you to con-quer sin.
 to die to self, and so to live by your most ho - ly Word.
 for - ev - er - more, in life and death, O Lord, with us a - bide.
 an Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at last at - tain!

WORDS: Claudia F. Hernaman, 1873, alt.

MUSIC: American folk melody, adapt.; harm. Annabel Morris Buchanan, 1938

LAND OF REST
C.M.

The Call to Confession

Leah Reed

The Prayer of Confession (unison)

**God our Redeemer,
we confess that we are people of ashes and dust.
We want you to notice our humility,
but we fail to notice neighbors in need.
We want you to show us your mercy,
but we fail to show mercy to others.
Forgive us, God of grace.
Cleanse our hearts and renew our spirits
so that we may know once again
the joy of your saving love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

The Silent Confession

The Solo

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”
Calvin Hampton

Warren Howell, solo

The Assurance of Pardon (responsive)

LEADER: The truth is this: God’s love and mercy are never-ending. God knows us in our inward being; God cleanses us from our sins and shortcomings, and restores to us the joy of salvation.

PEOPLE: **Thanks be to God!**

The Hebrew Bible

Isaiah 58:1-12

Lynn Lingafelt

The Christian Testament

2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10

The Gospel

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

The Homily

Christopher Chapman

“Seeking the Right Kind of Treatment for Our Condition”

The Invitation to Lenten Discipline (responsive)

LEADER: Friends in Christ, every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by remembering our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

PEOPLE: **We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, an ancient sign, that speaks of the frailty and uncertainty of human life, and marks the penitence of this community.**

LEADER: I invite you therefore, in the name of the Lord, to observe a holy Lent by self-examination, penitence, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and by reading and meditating on the word of God. Let us bow before our creator and redeemer.

PEOPLE: **Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth. May these ashes be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, so we may remember that only by your gracious gift do we experience everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

ALL: Amen.

The Imposition of Ashes

Tonight we impose ashes in the shape of a cross as we speak the words, “From dust you have come, to dust you will return.” The ashes offer a sign of our sinfulness and mortality. That they are imposed in the shape of a cross offers hope for God’s gifts of forgiveness and eternal life.

**I take the cross of Jesus Christ in ashes on my face.
This ancient symbol made in dust reminds me of his grace.
I beg for mercy from my Lord, to cleanse me deep within.
I know my self, my faulty life, my tendency toward sin.**

**O cross of ashes, speak again in ways I understand;
Speak forth repentance, let me know forgiveness from your hand.
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray; look deep within and find
Our hearts made whole our thoughts made pure, our eyes no longer blind.**

**This cross of ashes on my brow reminds me life is brief.
From dust I came, to dust I go through sorrow, pain, and grief.
These forty days are set aside for those who share the call
To take the cross, deny themselves, and give to Christ their all.**

— R.G. Huff, 2006

*The Benediction

*The Postlude

Maureen Howell

*Those who are able are invited to stand.

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